

and obtain a copy of records containing confidential or protected health information, or a summary of pertinent portions of those records, that pertain to a report authorized by subsection (a) or required by subsection (b) of this section.

(d) A person who makes a report pursuant to subsection (b) of this section or permits examination, review, or copying of medical records pursuant to subsection (c) of this section is immune from any civil or criminal liability that otherwise might be incurred or imposed as a result of complying with those subsections.

(e) Confidential or protected health information received by the State Health Director or a local health director pursuant to this section shall be confidential and shall not be released, except when the release is:

- (1) Made pursuant to any other provision of law;
- (2) To another federal, state, or local public health agency for the purpose of preventing or controlling a public health threat; or
- (3) To a court or law enforcement official or law enforcement officer for the purpose of enforcing the provisions of this Chapter or for the purpose of investigating a terrorist incident using nuclear, biological, or chemical agents. A court or law enforcement official or law enforcement officer who receives the information shall not disclose it further, except (i) when necessary to conduct an investigation of a terrorist incident using nuclear, biological, or chemical agents, or (ii) when the State Health Director or a local health director seeks the assistance of the court or law enforcement official or law enforcement officer in preventing or controlling the public health threat and expressly authorizes the disclosure as necessary for that purpose.

(f) The State Health Director shall develop a voluntary pilot program for hospitals and urgent care centers to provide emergency department data in order to assist the State Health Director with public health surveillance. A hospital or urgent care center that elects to participate in the program must provide all required emergency department data as a condition of participation in the program. Upon receipt of such data, the State Health Director shall remove from the entire data set the following direct identifiers of patients or of relatives, employers, or household members of patients: names; postal address information, other than town or city, state, and the first five digits of the zip code; geocode information; telephone numbers; fax numbers; electronic mail addresses; social security numbers; medical record numbers; health plan beneficiary numbers; account numbers; certificate or license numbers; vehicle identifiers and serial numbers, including license plate numbers; device identifiers and serial numbers; web universal resource locators (URLs); Internet protocol (IP) address numbers; biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints; and full face photographic images and any comparable images.

(g) In this section the following terms shall include:

- (1) "Health care provider" includes a physician licensed to practice medicine in North Carolina or a person who is licensed, certified, or credentialed to practice or provide health care services, including, but not limited to, pharmacists, dentists, physician assistants, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, advanced practice nurses, chiropractors, respiratory care therapists, and emergency medical technicians; and
- (2) "Health care facility" includes hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities, psychiatric facilities, rehabilitation